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REASONS
FOR
His Majesties Passing
THE
BILL
OF
EXCLUSION.

IN A
LETTER
To a FRIEND.

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REASONS for His Majeſties Paſſing The BILL of EXCLUSION.

I Am not ignorant that you have lately heard Reports to my diſadvantage, concerning ſome matters relating to the Publick: and though I flatter my ſelf (much more I confeſs from your Partiality to me, than any Merit I can pretend to) that you do not think the worſe of me for them; yet becauſe one cannot be too ſure of what one values ſo highly, as I do your Eſteem, I take the liberty to give you ſome account of my Thoughts of the preſent poſture of Affairs, that if I am not ſo happy as to continue ſtill in the good opinion you have formerly had of my firmneſs to the Publick Intereſt, I may learn at leaſt in what particular you conceive I have varied from it: Which laſt, though perhaps leſs welcome than the firſt, will yet be own'd as a very great mark of your Friendſhip, ſince I aſſure my ſelf, you have too much Charity for me to impute my Errours in this kinde to any worſe cauſe than want of Underſtanding.

I muſt confeſs, I have had no great Veneration of late for ſome Men, who though extreme zealous in appearance for things of Publick Concern, and particularly for the Bill for Excluding the Duke of *York* from the Succeſſion to the Crown, have yet taken ſuch Methods for the obtaining that Bill, as (with reſpect to their Popularity) look't to me, as if they had rather wiſh'd it ſhould be denied, than granted.

I mean a ſort of men that paſs with the Vulgar for very publick Spirits, yet are no otherwiſe for the Publick Good, than as they think it may conduce to their own private Deſigns. If matters be not diſpos'd for them to leap into a great Place, or to be reſtor'd to ſome Office they have formerly enjoy'd, and in which they have diſcovered Principles far different from what they now profeſs: if every one they have a prejudice to be not immediately removed, or perhaps if they fancy themſelves the moſt likely to head the Rabble, ſhould things fall into confuſion; they will be ſure with great appearance of Zeal to preſs things of leſs moment, and which they think will be denied, leſt any thing that really tends to Settlement ſhould be granted; and they are for the moſt part gainers by this, for their Vehemence, which proceeds from dark and hidden cauſes, ſeldom fails of being miſtaken by the Vulgar for a true and hearty Love of their Country. I believe His Majeſty will finde theſe men harder, I am ſure leſs neceſſary to be ſatisfied, than the Nation: And therefore I hope you will not wonder if I, who care not much for a great Office if the Bill of Excluſion do paſs, or to be popular with the Rabble if it do not, cannot heartily concur with all that ſeems to be aimed at by that ſort of people.

I ſuppoſe you have heard which way I have declar'd my Opinion con-

cerning that Bill, when I thought it to any purpoſe: But give me leave (with as little reflection upon the Cauſes of the breach of the laſt Parliament, as the ſubject will permit) to tell you, what in my poor judgment may moſt conduce to the paſſing it in the Parliament which is to meet at *Oxford*. I cannot imagine how popular Speeches in either Houſe, or angry Votes that are not always backt with the ſtrongeſt Reaſon, much leſs the Pamphlets that fly about in the Intervals of Parliament, can ſignifie much to the obtaining this Bill; for to what purpoſe are Arguments to the People to prove the neceſſity of that, which they are ſo fully convinc'd of already?

I ſhould rather think it worthy the Wiſdom of the next Parliament, to conſider what Argumens are moſt likely to prevail with the King himſelf in this matter; and inſtead of ſuch Addreſſes as carry the leaſt ſhew of Menace in them, which cannot but be offenſive, ſince to ſuppoſe a King capable of Fear, is the worſt Complement can be made him; inſtead of angry Votes which may alienate the Hearts of the people yet farther from His Majeſty, and make him more averſe from granting their reaſonable Deſires, and conſequently from conſenting to this Bill, to lay before him ſuch Reaſons for it, as may convince him that it is his own particular Intereſt to paſs it.

I do not mention the Houſe of Lords, being too well aſſur'd of the Loyalty of that Noble Aſſembly, to doubt of their paſſing any thing for which His Majeſty ſhews the leaſt Inclination. Taking it then for granted that this Bill only ſticks with His Majeſty, no Arguments are of moment to obtain it, but ſuch as ought to be of weight with Him; and thoſe I conceive to be of this Nature.

One Objection muſt firſt be removed: for ſince Kings, of all Men living, ought to have the greateſt regard to Juſtice, we muſt not ſuppoſe that His Majeſty can ever conſent to this Bill, till he be ſatisfyed of the Juſtice of it. I ſhall therefore endeavour to prove, not onely that it is juſt, but agreeable to the very intention and deſign of Government.

It ſeems to me to be an undeniable Poſition, that Government is intended for the ſafety and protection of thoſe that are Govern'd; and that where the Supreme power is lodg'd in a ſingle Perſon, he is Inveſted with that power, not for his own greatneſs or pleaſure, but for the good of the People. The Tyrannies in *Ariſtotles* time, and thoſe that continue to this day in the Eaſtern parts, muſt certainly have degenerated from a better kind of Government by ſome accident or other; ſince what people can be ſuppos'd to have been ſo void of ſenſe, and ſo ſervilely inclin'd, as to give up their Lives and Liberties to the unbounded diſpoſal of one man, without impoſing the leaſt condition upon him? For admit, according to Mr. *Hobbes*, that Monarchical Government is form'd by an Agreement of a Society of Men, to devolve all their power and intereſt upon one Man, and to make him Judge of all Differences that ſhall ariſe among them; 'tis plain, that this can be for no other end, than the Security and protection of thoſe that enter into ſuch a Contract; otherwiſe, you muſt ſuppoſe them Mad-men, voluntarily to ſtrip themſelves of all means of Defence, againſt the fury and violence of one of their number, rather than continue in a ſtate of War, where at the worſt, they are as free to Rob, as they are ſubject to be Rob'd. 'Tis hard therefore to conceive, that Abſolute Monarchy could ever have been conſtituted by conſent of any Society of Men, (beſides that we ſee thoſe that live under them, would be glad to ſhake off their Yoke if they could)

could) but 'tis probable they may have been rais'd by the Ambition and Valour of ſome Prince, or Succeſſion of Princes, or by the peoples ſupineneſs in ſuffering themſelves to be enſlav'd by degrees, and ſo being at laſt forc'd to ſubmit, when 'twas too late to oppoſe.

I have inſiſted the longer upon this Argument, becauſe another depends upon it, which comes nearer the preſent Queſtion; for if no Reaſon of Government can be aſſign'd, but the Safety and Protection of the People, it follows naturally, that the Succeſſion of Princes in Hereditary Monarchies, cannot be binding, nor ought to be admitted, where it proves manifeſtly inconſiſtent with thoſe ends. I need not inſtance in all the caſes that incapacitate a Prince to perform the Office of a Chief Governour; but I can think of no diſability ſo ſtrong or ſo undeniable, as his being of a different Religion from that which is generally own'd by the People.

Religion, conſider'd only in a Politick Senſe, is one of the chief Supports of Civil Government; for the fear of corporal Puniſhments, nay of Death itſelf, would often prove inſufficient to deter men from refuſing Obedience to their Superiours, or from breaking their Laws, without thoſe ſtronger tyes of Hope of Reward, and Fear of Puniſhment in another Life. The *Romans*, of a fierce and rude people, were made tractable by *Numa*, and ſubmitted to ſuch Laws and Cuſtoms as he thought fit to introduce, not ſo much by their being convinc'd of the reaſonableneſs of thoſe Laws, as by the finding a way to perſwade them, that all his new Conſtitutions were the Dictates of a Divinity, with whom he pretended daily to converſe. This ſenſe of Religion rais'd that People afterwards to that incredible exactneſs of Order and Diſcipline; and the belief they had the Gods of their ſide, made them run ſo intrepidly upon Dangers, that *Cicero* obſerves, that though ſome Nations excell'd them in Learning and Arts, others equall'd if not exceeded them in Valour and Strength, 'twas to Religion, and their reſpect to Divine Myſteries, that they ow'd their Conqueſt of the World. But this very Religion, that is the Bond of Union between a Prince and his People, when both profeſs the ſame, muſt of neceſſity produce the contrary Effects, and be the ſeed of the moſt fatal Diſorders, nay of the Diſſolution of Governments, where they differ. The ſame Conſcience that tyes the Peoples Affections faſteſt to the Prince in the firſt caſe, diſſolves all manner of Truſt, all bonds of Obedience, in the ſecond.

It is impoſſible that a Prince ſhould ſignifie any thing towards the ſupport of the People's Religion, being himſelf of another; nor would it ever be believed, if he could: And how can that Government ſubſiſt, where the People are unanimouſly poſſeſt with a belief that the Prince is incapable of protecting them in that which for the moſt part they value above all other conſiderations? I know no inſtance can be given in this *Northern* part of the World, even in thoſe Kingdoms that have varied from their Original Conſtitution and are become Abſolute, that a Prince of a different Religion from the People, was ever admitted to the Crown. Queen *Mary* here in *England* met with ſome oppoſition; yet ſhe could not be ſaid to be of a different Religion from the People: for *Popery* was ſo far from being extirpated in her days, that ſhe found a Parliament that joyn'd with her in the reſtoring that Religion. But in *France*, when the King of *Navarre*, a Proteſtant, was preſumptive Heir to the Crown, the States aſſembled at *Blois* (as all Hiſtorians of that Time agree) had cer-

tainly Excluded him, and the reſt of that Branch that were *Proteſtants* from the Succeſſion, if they had not parted abruptly, upon the Death of the Duke of *Guiſe* and his Brother. Nay ſome affirm, that the King himſelf, though of the Eſtabliſh'd Religion, was not out of danger of being Depos'd, upon a Suſpicion of his favouring too much the *Proteſtant* Faction, in oppoſition to the League. After the Kings Death the Hereditary Right was without Diſpute in the King of *Navarre*; but he found none to aſſiſt him in the making good his Title, but the *Proteſtant* Party, of whom he was the Head, and ſome Creatures of his Predeceſſour, that took his part more out of Hatred to the League, than Affection to him. This Prince was at laſt indeed admitted to the Crown, upon his Converſion to the Church of *Rome*. But that would not have ſufficed, nor would the Generality of the People, who were extremely zealous for their Religion, ever have truſted one that had been of another, had he not happen'd to be a Prince of incomparable Courage and Conduct, who through Seas of Blood, and after many Victories, forcing his Entrance into the Capital City, made his way to the Throne by Conqueſt, rather than by a voluntary Admiſſion of the People. It is obſervable by the way, that the Biſhops and Clergy of *France* were ſo far from ſetting up a Divine Right of Succeſſion above the Religion eſtabliſh'd, that moſt of them oppoſed him even after his Converſion, all of them before; and the Pulpits rung with ſuch bitter Invectives againſt him, (only upon the account of Religion) as perhaps no Age can parallel. This I ſhould think might ſerve for Inſtruction to ſome Biſhops, that I could name, who by maintaining that nothing ought to over-rule the Hereditary Right of Succeſſion, muſt either confeſs, that their Religion deſerves not ſo much to be defended as the *Romiſh* doth, or that they themſelves are not ſo zealous in the defence of it as they ought to be. Let theſe Aſſertors of Divine Right tell me, if in *France*, at this day the moſt Abſolute Monarchy in *Europe*, and where the Succeſſion is held moſt Sacred, a *Proteſtant* Prince would be admitted to the Crown.

And here in *England*, beſides the conſideration of Religion, that of Property is not to be neglected, ſince what ſecurity can be given that Abbey-Lands, in which moſt Landed men in the Kingdom have a ſhare, would not be reſtor'd to the Church under the Reign of a Popiſh Prince? The Objection that a Prince may be of the Church of *Rome*, and yet not change the Eſtabliſht Religion, is frivolous. For though there may be a poſſibility of his not attempting it, deterr'd perhaps by the peoples univerſal deteſtation of Popery, or diſcourag'd by the ill ſucceſs of former Attempts; this amounts to no more, than that he will not bring Popery in, becauſe he cannot. But is this all that a King of *England* is obliged to do, by the Oath which he takes at his Coronation? An Oath not only a Crime for him to take, (if he be a Papiſt) but impoſſible for him to keep. For can a Papiſt defend that Religion to the utmoſt of his power, which cannot be fully ſecured but by the ſuppreſſion of his own? Can he be a fit Head of the Proteſtant Intereſt abroad, who (while he continues of the Church of *Rome*) muſt wiſh there were never a Proteſtant left in the world? If he be incapable of doing this, that is, if the ends of Government cannot be obtained in the ordinary courſe of Succeſſion, the State muſt of neceſſity fall into Confuſion, if there be not an extraordinary power lodg'd ſomewhere, to provide for its preſervation.

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That Power here in *England*, is in a Parliament, and has often been made uſe of; but I conceive, for the Reaſons above mention'd, never more juſtly than upon this occaſion.

And though the Juſtice of this Bill be very clear, I think the next thing yet eaſier to prove, which is, That it is His Majeſties real Intereſt to paſs it. For if this Government be ſo conſtituted, that the King having the Hearts of his people, is one of the moſt conſiderable Princes in *Europe*, but without them ſignifies but little, either at home or abroad, as I doubt that is the caſe; and if nothing can contribute more to the alienating the peoples Affections from him, than his denying this Bill, one would think there needed no other Motives to induce His Majeſty to paſs it. But beſides, I ſhould not think this unworthy of His Majeſties Conſideration, if there are ſome perſons to whom he may have a juſt prejudice, and who if they cannot bring to paſs what-ever they propoſe to themſelves, will ſtill be endeavouring to make the Breach wider; whether the denyal of this Bill may not furniſh them with too plauſible Arguments with the People, to refuſe ſuch neceſſary demands as His Majeſty may make for the Safety of the Kingdom, or the ſupport of his Alliances; and whether on the contrary, the paſſing it may not very much diſappoint thoſe Counterfeit Patriots, by taking from them the beſt pretence they have of ſtirring up the People to Sedition.

Nay, who knows but the refuſal of this Bill may exaſperate the Nation to that degree, that a Title may be ſet up on pretence of a former Marriage, by the help of falſe Witneſſes, which though as ridiculous in itſelf, as injurious to His Majeſties Reputation, may yet put the whole Kingdom into a flame?

The Expedient of taking away all Regal Power from a Popiſh Succeſſor, and leaving him only the Name of a King, can be no ſatisfactory ſecurity to the Nation, unleſs ſuch a Form of Government were ſetled during the Life of his Predeceſſor. For otherwiſe the Succeſſor, (having a right to the Crown, which without an Act to exclude him he will have) may not only pretend that the Predeceſſor cannot give away his Prerogative, but probably may ſucceed in oppoſing it, by the difficulty that is always found in the introducing of New Conſtitutions. Now whether this Expedient (being put in practice during the Life of the preſent King) be not as good for the people, as the Bill, I ſhall not now diſpute; but as to the King himſelf, I think 'tis clear, that nothing can be leſs for his Honour or Intereſt, than to admit of ſuch an Expedient.

The Objection that this Bill may Diſunite *Scotland* from *England*, ſeems not very weighty. For firſt, we know not but a Free Parliament there, may paſs a Bill to the ſame effect; but if they do not, the Diſunion cannot happen, unleſs the Duke outlive the King; and in that caſe, will continue but during his Survivance, for the next Succeſſor will unite the Kingdoms again. This inconvenience therefore, if it be at all, will be of ſo ſhort continuance, as cannot be of weight to ballance with thoſe preſent and viſible Miſchiefs that may fall upon the Nation for want of this Bill.

Some have fancy'd, and I hope 'tis but a fancy, that the King has made a Solemn promiſe to his Brother, never to paſs it. I will ſuppoſe the worſt. If His Majeſty have made ſuch a promiſe, I conceive, with ſubmiſſion, it is void in itſelf. For if he have taken an Oath at his Coronation to maintain the Eſtabliſht Religion, and in order to that, it be neceſ-

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ſary to paſs this Bill, I doubt no ſubſequent promiſe can abſolve him from the performance of that Oath. In the next place, all promiſes are underſtood to be for the advantage of him that makes them, or of him they are made to, or both. But the performing this would not only be ruinous to His Majeſty, but of no advantage to his Royal Highneſs: for how great ever his Merit and Vertues are acknowledged to be, he lyes under a circumſtance that makes it impoſſible for him to come to the Crown (though this Bill never paſs) but by Conqueſt; and that way he may have it, notwithſtanding all the Acts that can be made to oppoſe him.

I ſhall add no more to the trouble I have given you upon this Subject, but that I am for this Bill, becauſe I think it juſt and neceſſary, not becauſe it is contended for by a Party: for I hold my ſelf as free to differ with that Party, when I think them in the wrong, as to agree with them when they have reaſon of their ſide. This may be an Errour, at leaſt may be ſubject to miſ-conſtruction, in a time that moſt things are ſo; but I hope you that have known me long, will judge more charitably of

SIR,

Your moſt Humble Servant.

FINIS.

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